



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

CLASS AND CASTE

I. THE RISE OF GROSS INEQUALITIES

EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS

University of Wisconsin

All about us we see men rising or sinking in responsibility, influence, or power on account of their personal qualities, but this does not result in distinct social layers. Social strata there will not be unless there is some kind of inheritance—of occupation, of prestige, of office, of authority, of property on the one hand; of lowly calling, of unfreedom, and of disability on the other.

One of the earliest social differentiations is that between the sexes. In the predatory epoch, out of which grew the barbarian culture, the subordination of women and their treatment as objects of ownership arose from the fact that they could not fight. Since the core of the tribe was the body of warriors, and all other activities became subsidiary to the martial activity, fighting capacity gave the point of view from which persons and sexes were rated. The mere workers, including women and those weak of body, fell, therefore, into a lower social position.

Another early basis for hereditary superiority was afforded by *kinship with the divinity*. When the intermingling of men of different kindreds had broken down the tribal system and substituted the tie of a common worship for the tie of blood, not all the members of the community could be thought of as children of its god. But since such gods were, in origin, the deities of certain old families, the members of these families might plume themselves on their descent from the gods and make such a pedigree a basis for aristocratic pretensions. Thus, among the Greeks as well as among the Semites, royal and noble houses long continued to trace their stem back to a divine forefather.

But by far the commonest basis of aristocracy is *wealth*. A great fortune not only exempts a family from humilific employments and enables it to bedazzle with a splendid style of living, but through nearly all history it has commanded ennoblement. Birth, no doubt, explains the ranking of *individuals*, but the root cause of the rank differences in *families* has been wealth—wealth, moreover, *in a large block*, and therefore not gained in ordinary ways. The ups and downs of fortune which we see occurring all about us in consequence of individual differences in ability, enterprise, character, or diligence shed little light on the origins of fixed classes. Through the thousand channels it controls, the dominant class always propagates the idea that social distinctions have originated in differences in personal capacity and virtue, and that they owe nothing to crime, fraud, corruption, favoritism, or privilege. The truth is, however, that the fortunes which become dynamos of social power are far from being mere by-products of the ordinary distribution of wealth according to economic traits.

Priority is one basis of acquisitive advantage. In the mediæval towns, the determination as to which of the fugitive serfs should be master and which servant chiefly depended on which ran away the earlier. It was not long before the “old burgher” families drew about themselves a line against the newcomers. The former ran the guilds, ruled the town, monopolized trade, and reserved for themselves the benefits from the communal lands. The city thus became divided into “burghers” and “inhabitants.”

In Australia adventurous sheepmen early pushed on into the public domain in advance of the government surveys, and “squatted” with their flocks on vast areas from which their shepherds excluded all settlers. Whole districts of valuable crop country remained untilled in the hands of pastoralists, who soon became wealthy and powerful men. When the state later attempted to resume its rights over these tracts the “wool kings” were too strong to be dispossessed, and the government had to content itself with exacting a small rent upon the area occupied.

Booty may give a seigniorial class its start. Thus in the Dark Ages agricultural communities gave themselves up to peaceful pursuits and hired *scholæ*, or bands of unruly men gathered about

hirdmen, or temporary chieftains, to protect them. But the warrior bands had more opportunities for enrichment than the peaceful tillers in the communities. Success in fighting brought them droves of cattle, iron, and slaves. Says Kropotkin:

There was plenty of waste land and no lack of men ready to till it, if only they could obtain the necessary cattle and implements. . . . And if one of the *hirdmen* of the armed brotherhoods offered the peasants some cattle for a fresh start, some iron to make a plough if not the plough itself, his protection from further raids, and a number of years free from all obligations, before they should begin to repay the contracted debt, they settled upon the land. And when . . . these pioneers began to repay their debts, they fell into servile obligations toward the protector of the territory.¹

GRANTS OF LAND AS FOUNDATION OF A LEISURE CLASS

Mobile productive property is comparatively a late thing in the world, so that, through most of human history, a landed estate has constituted the economic basis of a noble family. Hence *grants of land* play a leading rôle in social destiny. When the elders of Israel importuned Samuel for a king, the aged prophet warned them: "He will take your fields and your vineyards and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants" (I Sam. 8:14).

Early Egyptian kings bestowed on distinguished military officers portions of the crown domains. The absorption of the Roman *ager publicus* by senators and other insiders made them enormously rich and started the senatorial aristocracy on its career of six centuries. William the Conqueror distributed his newly won kingdom into about sixty thousand parcels of nearly equal value from each of which was due a "knight's service on horse-back."

In Japan in the seventh century a people essentially patriarchal in constitution was divided into governing and supporting classes. The former consisted of a civil nobility of rank and office, the higher ranks and offices being accompanied with definite grants of rice land to be held during tenure of office and exempted from the payment of tributes and forced labor.

¹ *Mutual Aid a Factor in Evolution*, p. 156.

In 1586, under Queen Elizabeth, the plan for peopling the province of Munster in Ireland proposed to divide it into seignories of from 4,000 to 12,000 acres, to be offered to the younger sons of gentlemen, who would "have the manrode of so many families and the disposing of so many good holdings," being "a thing fit for gentlemen of good behaviour and credit and not for any man of inferior calling."

It is the New World, however, that affords the best view of the manufacture of social superiors by grants of land. Throughout Spanish America the agricultural natives were divided among, and "commended" to, the conquerors, and as the growth of a colony brought more land within reach it was always passed out in large tracts to those within the governing circle or their friends. The "Laws of the Indies" prescribed that lands should be apportioned according to one's station, the gentleman's portion being at least five times the peasant's. The fact is that not one rood of good soil went straight to the cultivator. Today all down the west coast of South America there exists nowhere a population of independent small farmers.

Since the separation from Spain, the public lands of the Spanish American republics have been alienated in the old way to capitalists, speculators, and "insiders." Mexico, up to the recent revolution, was owned in a few thousand holdings, most of them very large, and one of them embracing eight million acres, or as much as Connecticut and New Jersey combined. The unfortunate validation of huge Mexican grants to the extent of nine million acres of the choicest land by the American courts after our occupation of California gave society there an early plutocratic cast from which it has not yet fully recovered. In 1855 a justice of the United States Supreme Court declared that "principalities are won by an affidavit and conferred upon the unscrupulous few, to the exclusion and detriment of the many."

In Argentina there are holdings stretching for hundreds of square miles, and ranches which a train takes the best part of a day to cross. The pampas, cleared of Indians by General Roca's expedition in 1879, was promptly alienated at a price of three cents an acre, after great quantities had been presented to the officers

who took part in the expedition. Half a century ago the government allowed one man to acquire, at an average price of three and one half cents an acre, a *hundred square leagues* of land which, after having made some scores of millionaires, is now worth *five hundred times* the purchase price. Until lately the smallest unit of public land ever considered by the government was the square league, and the only question was how many such leagues the grantee should obtain.

In Australasia the alienation of public lands went forward in such a fashion that, about the end of the last century, in New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand, 105,500 persons owned thirty thousand square miles, in lots of less than a thousand acres, whereas 1,255 persons owned fifty-five thousand square miles in holdings of ten thousand acres and above.

In colonial Virginia manorial families got their start in huge land grants obtained by favor or bribery. Several generations of wealth and pride and leadership on the one hand, and of dependence and humility on the other, might hinge on a secret agreement among the members of the provincial council to carve great estates for one another out of the public lands temporarily in their custody.

Even worse was the land grabbing in colonial New York. An Amsterdam merchant, Van Rensselaer, acquired from the Indians for a few "duffels, axes, knives, and wampum" an estate of seven hundred thousand acres, which, entailed to the eldest son for over two hundred years, gave a single family an utterly factitious political and social importance. After New Netherlands became New York, the creation of great landed proprietors with feudal rights over the people on their estates was facilitated by a royal governor, Fletcher, who in the closing years of the seventeenth century gave princely grants in return for bribes. A Bayard received twelve hundred square miles; a Smith, a block fifty miles long; a Beekman, one estate sixteen miles long and another twenty miles by eight miles; a Schuyler was given land extending for fifty miles, while a Livingston became lord of a manor of four hundred square miles. Despite the efforts of Fletcher's successor, Lord Bellomont, the magnates were too strongly intrenched in

provincial assembly and courts to be ousted from the grants they had corruptly obtained.

Even after a royal order was issued limiting a future grant to two thousand acres, great estates were built up by the trick of using "dummies" as co-grantees. With some of the New York patents went the hereditary right to a seat in the legislature. Thus by a few shrewd strokes at an early day certain scheming and grasping men were lifted to be founders of aristocratic families, society was forced from its normal course into the path of patronage and dependence, and the seeds were planted for a hundred years and more of privilege, class bitterness, and strife.

The disposition of the public domain of the United States, undoubtedly the largest and most valuable body of land that has ever been distributed by government, reveals an incessant struggle between the intentions of the people and the efforts of the greedy. In spite of the Homestead law of 1863 which, with the pre-emption acts, brought about the best distribution of virgin land that has been achieved in the New World, and which, in a single generation, undoubtedly contributed more to human welfare than any law in history, there has been a serious engrossment of natural wealth. In 1909 the pending cases of alleged fraud and illegality in the acquisition of public lands involved a value of one hundred and fourteen millions of dollars. Seven thousand square miles of land were granted to canal companies. A quarter of a million square miles went to railroad companies. Out of a hundred thousand square miles taken up under the Swamp Land acts vast areas were of the richest agricultural land, acquired by means of perjury, fraud, and corruption. In 1884 thirty-two cases of illegal fencing reported by the land office involved the use of seven thousand square miles of the public domain. In 1903 a land-office report estimated that in the preceding twenty-five years more than sixty million dollars' worth of timber had been stolen from the public lands and forests.

In 1885 an honest and fearless commissioner of public lands declared that he found himself "confronted with overwhelming evidence that the public domain was made the prey of unscrupu-

lous speculation and the worst forms of land monopoly." Twenty years later the Public Land Commission reported that "perhaps in general a larger proportion of the public land is passing into the hands of speculators and corporations than into those of actual settlers." "Inquiries made as to how a number of estates, selected haphazard, were acquired," showed that "almost without exception collusion or evasion of the letter and spirit of the land laws was involved."

It is, of course, impossible to measure how much such original mal-distribution of the public domain has contributed to the rise of wealthy and powerful families in American society, but no one doubts that it has been a factor of prime importance in causing this sinister phenomenon.

THE STATE AS CREATOR OF INEQUALITY

It is impossible to characterize the state as essentially either the source or the curb of hereditary social differences. Its tendency in this respect depends altogether on who controls the state. The class state will be, if not a fountain of inequalities, at least their mainstay. To the degree that the state comes under the control of broader social layers it will offer resistance to the development of extreme inequalities and will hedge the acquisitive struggle with rules designed to make it fairer.

The state is, in its earliest form, a fighting organization, and at its first appearance it creates a fresh and sharp differentiation. The passage of the Israelites from the régime of judges to that of kings brought into existence a nobility which soon usurped the authority of the elders. The relatives of the king and his chief war captains became the great men of the realm, so that the old assembly of the elders of the tribes fell into disuse. At a later period the pristine equality of the priests among themselves was lost, owing to the fact that superiority was conceded to priests from families from which high officials had been taken or which had received marked favors from the monarch.

Although in republican Rome the state appears as protecting inequalities which it had not itself created under the empire the

state came to play a great part in creating inequalities. From Diocletian on, the rankings of the servants of the state fixed degrees of social distinction. Says Bury:

In the time of Constantine only those who had held the highest official rank, consuls, proconsuls, or prefects, were members of the senate. The new forms of court ceremony, which were instituted by Aurelian and Diocletian and elaborated by their successors, gave to such personages precedence over lesser dignitaries, and they were distinguished by the title of *clarissimi*, "most renowned." Social rank depended on precedence at court, and precedence at court depended on official position. Thus, under Constantine and his immediate successors, *clarissimi* and senators denoted the same class of persons, though regarded under different aspects. Officers of lower rank were grouped into two classes, the *perfectissimi* and *egregii*, who were not members of the senate. These included the governors of dioceses and provinces, dukes, *correctores*, and others.¹

In the Teutonic war bands which more and more filled the foreground as the Empire lost its grip, the thing that counted was nearness to the prince. To be "friend" or client of the headman became a title of honor in address and inscription. The *comes* or "companion" became ancestor of all "counts" and the *comites*, the first rank of nobles.

In all the kingdoms founded by such war bands, the service of the king was the source of all distinction. In France in the sixth century the top class was the senators, noble by ancestry and rich by hereditary wealth. A century later, under the Frankish kings, the nobles were simply the high royal functionaries, the big men of the palace. They all got rich, to be sure, but their wealth was the by-product of the high offices into which they had been lifted by the royal will.

The feudal system was a mode of organizing military power in a country, and for a long time the enjoyment of a fief carried with it the obligation to maintain armed forces and render military service. But the fiefs, at first granted for life, became hereditary and later all the feudal dues were abolished. National defense came to be provided for on an entirely different plan, and the lordly estates originally granted for the maintenance of a vital public service became private property, pure and simple.

¹ *History of the Later Roman Empire*, Vol. VI, p. 39.

There is a widespread impression that in modern Europe ennoblement has rarely amounted to more than royal recognition of the success of the fortunate. It is true that since Europe beheld a king under the guillotine monarchs have been chary in using the public wealth to enrich their favorites. But one needs only to go back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to find, not only titles and honors, but also crown lands, confiscated estates, money grants, monopolies, lucrative offices, sinecures, and hereditary pensions lavishly bestowed by kings upon their servants, supporters, and favorites. Up to the epoch when great fortunes began to be made in trade and manufacture, the sovereign had immense power in determining who should constitute the leisure class.¹

LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS AS PROPS OF THE SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Laws and institutions have had much to do with social stratification. It is hardly possible to keep a nobility on a lofty plane without resort to primogeniture and entail. When landed property is divided equally among the children, the prolific family soon loses its splendor and prestige. If the title passes to all the sons, it loses its scarcity value. Where, as in Germany, all the sons of a baron are barons, the title becomes insignificant. Italian counts and Portuguese marquises impress only those who do not realize how numerous they are. In Russia, owing to the fact that lands as well as titles are inherited by all the descendants of a noble house, the aristocracy has always shaded down into the common people, for the merest cab driver may turn out to be a "prince."

At the lower end of the social scale are often the unfree, who are in this condition because the law gives a far-reaching effect

¹ In his scathing reply to the Duke of Bedford, who had the temerity to criticize his pension, Edmund Burke says: "The grants of the House of Russell were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the Leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk, he plays and frolics in the ocean of royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating among the rood' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray—everything of him and about him is from the crown."

to the act of some ancestor. Thus, M. Fustel de Coulanges writes:

The sources of the mass of serfs that covered the soil of France for a thousand years are as follows: Some were serfs by birth, having descended from the slaves of Roman Gaul, or of Germany. Some were the captives of some raid. Some became slaves in consequence of crimes committed. Finally, there were many descended from free-born men who for various motives consented to become serfs, and became such usually by writing a letter stating that of their own will they become so and so's serf.¹

The thickest stratum of unfree is found when the law allows a debtor to pawn himself for a loan, when the starving man can legally contract himself into servitude, when the parent can sell his child, and when slavery is a hereditary condition. Had we such laws as have for centuries endured among some Christian peoples there is no shadow of doubt but every period of industrial depression and unemployment would precipitate tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens into unfreedom. Apologists for the existing order would then insist that their hard lot was the "natural" recompense of inefficiency, just as such apologists now insist that the monstrous fortunes among us are the "natural" recompense of superior ability!

In the middle and southern American colonies, besides the negro slaves there were great numbers of white bond servants in a state of temporary involuntary servitude. Aside from some four thousand who were prisoners taken in civil war, they were felon convicts, which, however, does not always imply great turpitude in a time when every excuse was snatched at to stock the tobacco plantations with labor from the submerged classes of English towns.

Their social status is thus described:

None could marry without consent of the master or mistress, under penalty of an addition of one year's service to the time set forth in the indenture. They were worked hard, were dressed in the cast-off clothes of their owners, and might be flogged as often as the master or mistress thought necessary. If they ran away, at least two days might be added to their time of service for each day they were absent. Father, mother, and children could be sold to different buyers. Such remnants of cargoes as could not find purchasers

¹ *L'Alleen et le Domaine rurale*, pp. 289-90.

within the time specified were bought in lots of fifty or more by a class of speculators known as "soul-drivers" who drove them through the country like so many cattle and sold them for what they would bring.¹

Besides these there were great numbers of "redemptioners," or immigrants too poor to pay their passage, who, on their arrival in America, sold themselves to him who for the shortest term of service—usually five years—would reimburse the captain of the ship for the cost of their passage. Who can doubt that tens of thousands would even now make their way to America on such terms if such contracts were enforceable under American law?

Often wealth confers advantages which bring yet more wealth. Thus the founders of the Danish aristocracy were simply peasants who fortified their houses during deadly village struggles and then used their advantage. In old English times a hardy refugee from another community—lawbreaker or fugitive from oppression—offered himself as fighter to that man in the community who appeared to be ablest to keep and protect him. Such "house carls," having no ties to the rest of the community, became fit instruments for imposing their master's will on his fellows. Thus the man who had a little the start of his neighbors became able to browbeat them, override community rights, appropriate community land, and make himself lord of the district.

The advantage from greater wealth grows in the degree that the state fails to furnish equal protection and justice. In the imperial domains of the later Roman empire the members of the senatorial aristocracy, becoming too independent owing to the immunities rashly granted them by the state, got out of hand and encroached upon the small neighboring landowners. Since in criminal matters the nobles were responsible to no one save the emperor or his immediate representative, the pretorian prefect, and since the lawsuits were decided by judges drawn from this class, the man whose land had been seized by a noble had no certain redress. Hence, the commoners fell into the practice of seeking from the strong that protection which the law should have afforded them. Each "commended" himself to some lord, and

¹ McMaster, *The Acquisition of the Social and Political Rights of Man in America*, pp. 34-35.

the *patron* relation spread through society. The petty landowners became tenants-at-will upon their ancestral acres, and over them the nobles wielded sovereign powers usurped from the state.

Before the advent of genuine governmental regulation our great railroad companies, by giving or withholding special rates, rebates, and facilities, destroyed or built up industries, rewarded or punished cities and states, made or ruined business men, and nursed monopolies like the oil trust and the anthracite coal trust. The failure of the state to exact equal treatment for shippers led to the shipper (as it were) "commending" himself to the railroad company. In the same way nothing but the long struggle of the trade unions has spared the laborers in some industries, e.g., the coal-mining industry of Colorado, from the necessity of virtually renouncing all appeal to the laws supposed to protect them and "commending" themselves to the conscience and humanity of their employers.

STATIC TIMES COMPARED WITH DYNAMIC TIMES

It is in changeful times or in changeful fields that new peaks or even plateaus are upheaved in society. While conditions continue static, the struggle for wealth, power, or prestige alters only slowly the social landscape. From one generation to the next its features remain much the same. Generally the high can stay up, while the low must stay down. Wealth, income, social power, sometimes even place and office, pass from father to son, even if brains do not. Individual differences in ability and character bring about some interchanges between the social strata, but not many. The family line establishes itself whenever it can and, in the absence of new fields of opportunity, the lot of a man depends much on his inheriting or failing to inherit such advantages as wealth, place, connections, or education.

On the other hand, rapid growth, headlong economic progress, the cropping up of chances in unexpected places, permit the sudden rise of new men. The discovery of the New World no doubt caused in the end more displacement of social power than any happening in history. But on a smaller scale we see the same thing at our elbow. The boom of a big city means great profits to some from rising land values. A new region is a fascinating gamble, since the

discovery of rare minerals or an outlet for ore, coal, or lumber, owing to the advent of a new railroad or the clearance of a waterway, is sure to lift some prospectors or settlers into millionaires' row. The eager exploitation of the natural wealth of Colorado and California made great changes in American social registers.

But new fields, like the electrical and the automobile industries, offer opportunities as rich as do cornucopia provinces like British Columbia or São Paulo. Inventions, such as the telephone, the bicycle, the trolley car, and the motion film, hatch a brood of new fortunes. The introduction into a region of some new crop—sugar beets, hops, or citrus fruits—throws chances in the way of the foresighted and enterprising, while some bright men mount into the empyrean on the wings of a clever idea, such as founding a "ten-cent" magazine, teaching by correspondence, popularizing health foods, or pushing a method of curing stammering or pursuing physical culture at home. War, like a continental upheaval, may alter most of the wealth courses, ruining old families while new Croesuses are made through munitions, shipping, army contracts, and the floating of war loans.

When army promotion goes by seniority, how slow is the rise of the talented subaltern; whereas war gives a "leg up" to a Clive, a Bonaparte, a Skobeloff, or a Kitchener! During a dull era in politics re-election is the rule, office shows a fondness for certain families and regular political dynasties appear; but an upheaval by disillusioned farmers or workingmen is likely to bring into public life demagogues and constructive reformers who otherwise would never have been heard of.

Scientific eminence cannot of course be entailed like a fortune. There are times, however, in which the prestige of the discoverer is, at least, a life estate, whereas in epochs of great intellectual fermentation laurels are constantly redistributed. In our time, thanks to the discovery of radioactivity, the germ origin of disease, immunity, the mutation of species, the Mendelian law of inheritance and mental suggestibility, a host of eager investigators are sharing in a glory which ordinarily would be monopolized by the retired explorers of older fields.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that the *channels* of social power may not shift as much as do its *sources*. The top people are not without some nimbleness of adjustment. Wealthy old families may "get in on the ground floor" of a new economic development, gather cream from a virgin mineral region or a field like the electrical industry, instead of keeping to father's line of investment. Our great capitalists have gained control of much of Alaska's resources, while the gold of the Transvaal has repaired the fortune of many a British noble. Likewise a public man of an old political family may be nimble enough to get on the winning side of a popular agitation, while the scientific investigator may keep his laurels green by leaving his earlier vein of research and going over into a new and more promising field.

LEGITIMATION

It is striking how frequently the fortunes which support social superiority originate in force, fraud, or corruption. One recalls the estates carved out of the church lands by Henry VIII after the dissolution of the monasteries; the profits from mingled crime and trade piled up by means of the Dutch East India Company; the oriental loot brought back to England by the "nabobs"; the lucrative Indian monopolies of tea, salt, opium, and spice; the wealth heaped up in the African slave trade; the infamous fortunes of the tax farmers under the old régime in France. Coming nearer home, there are the American fortunes founded on cheating in the army supplies during the Civil War, on railroad wrecking, on customs frauds, on the stealing of public lands, on proprietary medicines and food adulteration, on public franchises won by bribery, on tariff favors corruptly obtained, on prison-labor contracts, on vice catering, on tax dodging, and on numerous other iniquities. I refer not to methods of wealth-getting which a later generation has learned to condemn, but to acquisitive practices which outraged the contemporary standards of right and were pursued to a triumphant conclusion only because bribery and corruption turned the edge of every instrument the people sought to use against such practices, or because a secret control over sources of opinion deceived or confused the public as to what really was going on.

In order that these dunghap fortunes may be sublimated into social luster they undergo a process of *legitimation*, whereby ill-gotten wealth is made to look precisely like well-gotten wealth. The gatherer of tainted money may have to endure lifelong odium, but his descendants, when they get ready to retire from acquisition and devote themselves to enjoyment, may exchange it for sweet-smelling forms of property which will yield less dividend but more prestige. Then, too, as the crimes, frauds, and treacheries which lie at the basis of family pride and pretension recede a little into the past, they are quickly hidden under a veil of oblivion.

Many motives, some of them far from bad, are at work to bring this about. The present holders of ill-gotten fortunes not only have every interest in suppressing the truth, but they may be quite innocent of misleading the public as to the real character of the founder of the house. Then the rising generation is regularly fed with fairy stories which cloak the grim realities of the social *mêlée*. Its school-teachers, moreover, are nearly as ignorant and credulous as their pupils respecting the origins of private accumulations. To spare national pride, the shameful episodes and scandals, particularly those which reflect on conspicuous and influential families, have been expurgated from school history. Some of the most social-minded persons, namely those interested in institutions of social welfare, higher education, and scientific research, cherishing the hope of recovering portions of ill-gotten wealth for public uses, refrain from alluding to historical facts which might alienate possible donors.

Through advertising, the use of credit, etc., the newspapers are so dependent on the financially powerful that they generally keep silent as to the skeletons in the ancestral closets of such persons. Wide as is the range of partisan political discussions, they rarely acquaint the public with bits of history which might be resented as offensive by valued party workers or contributors. Let it be borne in mind, too, that the present holders of ill-gotten fortunes may be very decent and philanthropic persons, so that to the public it will seem wanton and malicious to rake up the piracies of their grandfathers.

Thus there is a kind of conspiracy of silence as to the origins of many fortunes which sustain present social pretensions. If a

scholar should dig out the truth from court records, assessment rolls, reports of public officers, and findings of committees of investigation, he would hardly find a publisher. So, of all important historical matter, this is the most perishable, the soonest forgotten, the hardest to revive. Yet such oblivion legitimates accumulations of the most scandalous origin and leads millions of capable and useful people to accept as their social superiors commonplace individuals who have no atom of distinction save that conferred by the skilful expenditure of income from inherited plunder.

SECONDARY DIFFERENTIATION

Great differences in social status presently give rise to contrasts in character which serve to accentuate and justify these differences. Normally, the personal ideal that grows up within a hereditary upper class is to be proud, free-handed, and high-spirited. If the class is also a martial and ruling class, its ideal will include courage and domineering will. Born to wealth and power, the members of a privileged order not infrequently manifest an independence of character, a frankness of speech, a simplicity of manner, and a dignity of bearing which are interpreted as natural traits of the *aristoi* or best. Hence, it is possible to popularize the myth that the nobility had its origin in the deliberate promotion of the best, and that its *raison d'être* is social service.

On the other hand, by the presence above them of the privileged, the masses are liable to be warped out of their true line of character growth. They accept the master-idea of the disgracefulness of work; yet for them there is no other lot. Their enforced economies and frugality of expenditure are taken as proofs of a want of natural dignity. So far as they lack adequate legal protection they find themselves under the necessity of combating force with deceit. In case the masses are mostly disinherited, they lose the property sense and are despised for their petty thievery. Thus, when concentration of wealth and power in the upper class is marked, the resulting want of manliness and truthfulness in the common people is held to reveal a natural defect, and inferiority of social status is justified as being the inevitable recompense for inherited weakness of character.